

Lessons Learned:

“Resources are out there to address this problem. You have to develop a strategy and be the catalyst to bring those resources together to function effectively and efficiently to accomplish the common goal.” US Conference of Mayors Best Practices

Don't be naive. Don't wait for the problem to go away. Be very proactive. If you start getting information that there could possibly be a gang in your city, then do your best to educate everyone who could come in contact with the suspected gang so they can help you know what you're facing. Then take your best course of action to approach the problem. Try to get it stopped while it still might be a youth gang before they develop into a hardcore gang. If you have a hardcore gang, put pressure on them by being proactive, being present and doing everything you can, so they do not get out of control. US Conference of Mayors Best Practices

They have case managers and deputies assigned to the NH GTF that actively participate in each youth's progress acting as mentors. This innovative approach allows the clinical social worker to assist in determining if a child is at risk for gang involvement rather than waiting for referrals that often times are delayed due to labeling concerns by school resource officers, school counselors, teachers or administrators. The New Hanover County Sheriff's Office has literally cut through all of the red tape and concerns of many by forming agreements with the school system and community groups to aid in providing a full service gang prevention, intervention and suppression unit.

In Charlotte, the Gang of One program has many of the same features but is less ambitious than the NH GTF. Gang of One offers a full spectrum of services to youths that have been identified as at risk for gang involvement. This program seeks to identify needs and place the referred youths in the appropriate programs across the county. Gang of One has identified many programs and community sponsored activities and developed agreements to provide services. This program is a model for law enforcement agencies that seek to be a referral source for prevention and intervention due to the capital intensive nature of a program such as in New Hanover County. This program recognizes the need for one source to have an understanding of all available resources in a community to battle the problems for youths of association in gang activities. This program is funded under a US Department of Justice *Project Safe Neighborhoods* grant through the Governor's Crime Commission.

US Conference of Mayors: Best Practices of Community Policing In Gang Intervention and Gang Violence Prevention Recognizes Three North Carolina Programs in 2006

While this publication offers some examples from North Carolina, it became obvious that these programs have limited impact. In Durham a program funded under a US Department of Justice *Project Safe*